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THE BURDEN

OF BABYLON





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THE BURDEN OF BABYLONDON

OR

THE SOCIAL INCUBUS

THE BURDEN OF BABYLON

OR

THE SOCIAL INCUBUS

AND OTHER *VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ*

BY

HUGH E. M. STUTFIELD

Societas societatum—omnia Societas

LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD

41 & 43 MADDOX STREET, BOND STREET, W.

1905

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CONTENTS

THE BURDEN OF BABYLONDON:

	PAGE
I. A SONG OF LAMENTATION - - - -	9
II. INTROSPECTIVE - - - - -	16
III. THE MODERN SYBARIS - - - -	18
IV. THE GENIUS OF RÉCLAME - - - -	23
V. THE DÉBUTANTE - - - - -	26
VI. TEMPUS EDAX - - - - -	29
VII. POLITE CONVERSATION - - - -	32
VIII. RELIGION À LA MODE - - - -	34
IX. THE CULT OF BEAUTY - - - -	36
X. THE WAY WE LIVE NOW - - - -	38
XI. THE CLIMBER'S PATH TO SOCIAL FAME - -	41
XII. POLITICS AND THE UPPER CRUST - - -	43
XIII. "AVE, SOCIETAS! MAGNA ES, ET PRÆVALEBIS!"	47

COLUMBIA VICTRIX - - - - -	51
----------------------------	----

A LOOK AHEAD - - - - -	63
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THE BURDEN OF BABYLON



I

A SONG OF LAMENTATION

" . . . the most acute attack of Social Sickness that the world has probably ever seen . . . so charged is the air with the bacilli, so hard is it to escape infection."—MR. E. F. BENSON in the *Fortnightly Review*.

I

THE nation's moral health, I learn,
 Its Galens note with grave concern :
 In weighty journals and Reviews,
 In tomes of formidable thickness,
 We read the most alarming news
 Of epidemic Social Sickness.
 O'er Smart Society's loss of tone
 Rises a universal moan ;
 Each week some horrid new complaint
 Infects the Classes with its taint,
 And many a wandering bacillus
 Empoisons, when it doesn't kill, us.

Of Ball-Room Leprosy* some cases
 Have been detected in high places :
 The frailties of our Idle Rich
 Have reached a truly shocking pitch ;
 And Britain's gilded Upper Crust,
 With constitutions undermined
 By wild excess of every kind
 And *Wanderjähren* on the bust—
 Fall (is it not so, Dr. Torrey ?)
 To honeyed lures an easy quarry.
 To virtuous souls, like you and me.
 'Tis grievous, Reader mine, to see
 How lightly lords and ladies trip
 Adown the Primrose Path—and, oh !
 The world has lately had the tip
 From persons plainly in the know,
 There is a Set that wallows in
 A slough of Scandal and of Sin !

II

Lord of all realms in earth and sky,
 The one divinity we own,
 The Golden Calf is set on high.
 His the sole sceptre and the throne,

* *Vide* Press correspondence on the lepers of our London ball-rooms.

No other shrine we burn incense on
(See works by Ouida and by Benson,
If you are seeking mental food
To stimulate the cynic mood.)
In Babylondon, I am told,
Love's darts are deftly tipped with gold ;
Else would they fail, the jesters state,
Our world-seared hearts to penetrate !
And rank is sold, and Beauty bought—
Such commerce reigns in Hymen's court—
We balance wedlock's loss and gain,
 As though it were a trade, a calling :
Yet, when we choose to wear its chain,
 We find it very far from galling !
Venus, our newsy Press declares,
 Is actually contemplating
A winding-up of her affairs,
 And generally liquidating :
She means to sell her car, her doves,
Her interest in human loves—
Mortals so shamefully neglect her—
To some concern with one-pound shares,
And Mammon managing director.

Yet may the Goddess be inclined
To change (as ladies will) her mind.
Maugre his Mother's resolution,
 Young Cupid still seems prone to range—
The rascal thinks his constitution
 Occasionally needs a change !
Ye sprightly Benedicks and wives
 Who, ere the honeymoon be spent,
 Separate by mutual consent—
I dare not contemplate your lives !
Do ye not tremble at the sound
 Of " Rita's " voice and stern Corelli's
As, fired with righteous wrath, they pound
 Your reputations into jellies,
And make each frisky worldling feel
The rod of their reforming zeal ?
Oh ! License waxes overbold,
While Virtue shivers in the cold !
The rampant luxury of the nation
 Its leading citizens bewail ;
Our physical degeneration
 Is vouched for by the *Daily Mail* :
Our old are frivolous, our young
 (" Onlookers " in their Note-Books say)
Exhausted, and with nerves unstrung—
 We must be in a parlous way

When Britain's *auvea juventus*
Are slim and scented popinjays
With—omen direful and portentous—
A taste for powder, paint, and stays!

111

And we who bear the hall-mark "Smart"
(Symbol of feminine backsliding!)
Butts for the Wit's envenomed dart,
The Writing Woman's shrill deriding—
Mere butterflies and fritterlings,
We serve, they say, no useful function,
And do all sorts of naughty things
Without the very least compunction;
While sometimes there's a hint ungente
We are not even ornamental!
'Twould seem—to hear the critics screaming—
Our morals are past all redeeming:
Careless of honour's obligation,
To compass our ignoble ends,
We prove our powers of fascination
By filching lovers from our friends;
Our lives are nought but push and worry:
Distraught by social hurry-scurry,
With chloral or the tiny needle
('Tis gospel—"Rita" tells you so;

And " Rita's " bound, of course, to know !)

The niggard God of Sleep we wheedle.

Our manners and our voices loud—

Ofttimes the new Society Shout

Has split your tympanum, no doubt—

We angle notice from the crowd ;

And discontent most undivine

Instils a quenchless thirst to shine.

'Tis bridge all day, and bridge at night

Till sickly beams of morning light

Greet the dull sparkle of tired eyes,

And Dawn in saffron 'gins to rise

On nervous systems overwrought

And tempers growing sadly short.

We've lately heard that signalling

Is not at all the proper thing ;

That woman, if resolved on playing,

Must be prepared, as man, for paying—

High stakes and lack of ready cash,

 Their issue oft is shameful debt ;

 And Fowler Satan spreads his net

To mesh us, foolish birds and rash.

O tempora, O mores !

Must scandal ever thus abound ?

 How shocking are the stories

Rumour sends flying round and round,

How yonder social sun has set—
Another social star is paling,
All owing to this dreadful failing !

Nor do they call a spade a spade
Who write Society novels :
The tools of these romancers' trade
Are imprecatory shovels !
Oh ! had I but the brain of Ouida
Or " Rita's " fine imagination,
Then from my nimble pen, dear Reader,
Would flow a tale to lick Creation—
A " simple " tale of gilded vice,
Reeking of rich Corellian spice ;
A tale where all the female swells
Are unregenerate Jezebels :
Its fascinating heroine,
With no redeeming point about her,
But just a regular out-and-outer—
Or possibly one might define her
As Pompadour-plus-Messalina—
A perfect masterpiece of sin.
Though no such being on earth exists,
Her portraiture the scribblers' prop is,
And helps the happy novelists
To sell their half a million copies !

INTROSPECTIVE

To be by spiteful tongues abused
 As rotten, rotten to the core ;
 To hear, a hundred times or more,
 We only live to be amused,
 Grows an unmitigated bore—
 Still, let us try to form some notion
 Whence springs, what causes, this commotion.
 Society, doubtless, stands alone
 In its peculiar ethic tone—
 Something, I grant you, quite its own ;
 Its scorn (like Mr. Cecil Rhodes)
 Of unctuous rectitude, its codes
 Of conduct modelled on *les modes*—
 How shall its moral judgments err,
 With Fashion for interpreter ?
 We are not mindful, in our Set,
 Of Mrs. Grundy's frown ; nor let

(Here, too, we match the late Colossus)
The Nonconformist Conscience boss us.
We're not exactly good or bad—
Highly complex is our psychology—
And, I should also like to add,
Our characters need no apology !
Our views and principles are plastic :
You mustn't ask polite Society
Ever to wax enthusiastic,
Or mar its pose of calm dubiety.
Your female zealot—Heaven preserve her !
We don't approve of moral fervour ;
Good form, no less, and sense of ratio
Are foes to *sava indignatio* ;
A kindly spirit of compassion
For sinners long has been the fashion,
And Toleration keeps in mind
That maxim sage, "Unkist, unkind !" —
No well-bred person ever quarrels
About his friends' or neighbours' morals.

III

THE MODERN SYBARIS

EXTRAVAGANCE, I don't deny,
Is sinful—so is ostentation :
But, if we make the shekels fly,
We learned it from the kindred nation
That brought to light that human pearl
Whose brilliance sets our brains aw whirl,
The Transatlantic "twencent" girl.
So do not blame us if we are,
Like her,* a bit particular,
Or if mere questions of expense
We treat with mild indifference—
Absurd to think that social queens
Must suit their *ménages* to their means !
Spare us, I pray, the usual screed
O'er Fashion's luxury and greed ;

* "The American girl is always striving to have the best of everything"—MRS. GEORGE CORNWALLIS WEST.

Forbear to give us worldlings beans
For all Life's tit-bits that we need—
Our pleasures, and (I must confess)
Our costly aids to comeliness ;
The modest mansion-house in town,
 The " cottage " in some Thames-side haunt,
Where packs of guests may scurry down
 For Saturday-to-Monday jaunt.
We've heard enough about the craze
For Panhards, Napiers, Serpollets—
Life, motorless, were dull and vapid ;
And 'tis our Twentieth-Century creed
To make a deity of speed :
We're all—men, women, motors—rapid !
As for the Highland moor, the salmon
 River, the opera-box, the yacht—
Why grudge these trifling " perks " of Mammon
 To ease the rigours of our lot ?

The wise may sternly reprobate,
 And say we're verging to decay :
 Still—though I cannot say them nay—
The simple life is out of date.
The very children of our day
Are little worldlings in their way :

The tot that lately learned to toddle
Has grand ideas within its noddle ;
It scorns the fairy-tales, the toys,
That used to be our infant joys,
But babbles, with the dawn of reason,
Of parties, dress, the Park, the Season.
Precocious cravings for high living
Moralists view with vain misgiving :
Vain, too, the Pædagogues's regret

When lads, in the parental parlour,
Their little whistles daily wet

With Perrier Jouet* or Ayala—
How thus shall Youth's instructors throttle
Its early relish for the bottle ?
And, when we reach a riper age,
One subject always must engage

Our serious attention—

I mean the science of gastronomy,
Coupled, I scarce need mention,
With due regard to strict economy.

All Britons true should cultivate

The noble art of dining :

You cannot overestimate

Its influence refining—

* See speech by the Headmaster of Haileybury at the Church Congress.

But household cares are most annoying,
And home-cooked viands sadly cloying,
So plainly everybody ought
To know where *gourmets* most resort
To fill the inner man ; and where
Persons content with simple fare
May find a modest table spread,
 In some select Lucullian shrine,
At two-pound-ten, or so, per head
 (This sum does not include the wine).

The cooks are threatening insurrection ;
 And then, gay nomads, won't we roam !
Oh ! grant us daily our refection
 At any place, kind Heaven, but home !
A Carlton dinner and the play—
 Such trivial *panem et Circenses*
Vouchsafe thy suppliants, we pray—
 With some kind friend to stand expenses !
Of knives and forks we love the clatter ;
 We cannot eat without a band,
And flee from the domestic platter
 To hostels in Pall Mall or Strand.
There young and old, and fair and foul,
And Vice and Virtue, cheek by jowl—

Beauties and Beasts—a motley horde,
All gathered round the festive board,
Take, in this most expensive inn,
Their ease amidst a deafening din.
Nobles of ancient pedigrees
Hobnob with parvenu M.P.'s ;
Mondaines with banter smart and witty
Engage young blue-bloods from the City :
With nose and *lorgnette* high in air,
A duchess of uncertain age
Transfixes with her restaurant stare
Some reigning beauty of the Stage.
Mark, too, yon gem-bedizened Jew,
With visage of ensanguined hue,
And—Fashion's constant votary—
His yet more gorgeous *vis-à-vis* :
In all that parti-coloured throng
None so magnificent as she ;
Upon her massive ombongpong
The ruby's and the diamond's rays,
A jewelled constellation, blaze—
But, tell me truly, do you think
They're genuine wares of Messrs. Spink ?

THE GENIUS OF *RÉCLAME*

WHEN first Victoria was Queen
And *good* Society ruled the roast,
The well-bred world was seldom seen,
Nor made publicity a boast.
We have them still, the "Bores and Bored,"
But where is now that "polished horde"
That always held itself aloof?
In these our Early Edward days
'Tis no occasion for reproof
Freely to court the public gaze;
And there's a science of *réclame*
That wins, without the dust, the palm.
Your fashionable capers
Must all be in the papers—
The early canter in the Row,
The noontide airing in the Park:
If shopping down Bond Street you go,
It were a pity to keep dark

So memorable an event !

Like toilet-soap or patent pill

That's cure for every human ill,

Daily seek good advertisement.

When staying in your native Square

Inform the Press that you are there ;

And, when you leave the madding crowd

In search of sea or country air,

The fact should be proclaimed aloud.

Such matters—pray don't think I'm jesting—

The suburbs deem most interesting,

So heed my admonition solemn

And don't despise the Fashion Column.

'Tis the magic of the par

Creates the social star :

Snooks, all agog for social fame,

May see that uneuphonious name

Adorn the Smart Intelligence

At quite absurdly small expense ;

And who, except a stingy ninny,

Would grudge the needful pound or guinea

That lets an anxious Public know

The news of Mrs. So-and-So ?

If ever in some spacious hall

You chance to give a Costume Ball,

Let a photographer be handy ;
And don't omit some casual hints
That portraits of each *belle* and dandy
Would much adorn our public prints !
Yourself adopt some Eastern pose
That needs a sacrifice of hose :
With sandalled and unstockinged feet
And jewels on your dainty toes,
The Press will vote the turn-out " sweet."
But, lest occasion should be missed,
Seek out the Lady Journalist—
" Babs " of the *Cackler*, " Maudie," " Kits,"
Or " Trix " of *Snappy Social Bits*,
Or her by whom is overheard
All the town-talk, the " Twittering Bird."
A fee—five shillings, more or less—
Secures a notice of your dress ;
But, if the writer has a title,
'Twere well to make it seven-and-six
By way of adequate requital,
When haply the obliging " Trix "
Will grant you, for the added pelf,
A paragraph all to yourself !

THE DÉBUTANTE

MISS HILDEGARDE JANE VAN DER BEER
Is coming out, they say, this year,
A débutante most captivating :
I think I'm justified in stating
That she the fairest by repute is
Of all the Season's budding beauties.
And now, that I may vindicate
 My ardent predilections,
Permit me to enumerate
 Her manifold perfections
(I scheduled them expressly for
The *Saucy Snippets*' editor).
First let me mention of her charms
Her ivory shoulders and her arms,
Her waist most exquisitely slender,
Her voice so mellow, soft, and tender ;
Her forehead low and broad, her eye
Bluer than any Southern sky.

Her cheeks are like a pair of posies ;
Their hue is that of

MILK AND ROSES ;*

Her *svelte*, well-rounded figure serves
To prove the magnetism of curves,
While auburn tresses crown in state
A proud, *petite*, and shapely *tête*.
She has a very queenly port ;

Yet it may cause you some surprise
To learn she's neither tall nor short—

In fact, she's just three-quarter size.
She dotes on all outdoor pursuits ;
Plays hockey, fishes, hunts, and shoots,
While very seldom have I seen
Her equal on the putting-green.

'Cross country, Nimrods state,

She goes extremely straight :

Her deadly little twenty-bore
Slays furred and feathered things, galore ;
She uses it—this young Diana—

In such an efficacious manner
That, when there echoes through the glade

The cry “ Hare forward ! Woodcock over ! ”

* This charming *nuance* may be obtained at Madame Layiton Thycke's “ Beauty's Penetration,” 495, New Bond Street—price only five guineas the pot.

Her fellow-sportsmen crouch, dismayed ;

Affrighted beaters run to cover.

Nor does she household duties shirk—

She's simply *great* at needlework !

Of sundry pets she idolizes

Her pug has taken several prizes,

While all the ladies' papers chat

About her favourite pussy-cat.

A perfect type of English maid,

She's not too bold, she's not too staid :

Her suitors vie with one another—

They simply bow before her ;

She is the idol of her mother,

Her maiden aunts adore her !

I pray you, Reader, don't be rough

On these poor foolish panegyrics :

Really, I haven't said enough

On the fair subject of my lyrics !

Our forbears would have stood amazed

To hear their daughters thus appraised—

They would have boxed my ears, I know,

For publishing such puffs inane,

But now the parents like it so.

No doubt, you think us very vain,

But please remember, nowadays

Publicity's the thing that pays.

VI

TEMPUS EDAX

OF plasmon, grape-nuts, and hot water
I am by no means a supporter ;
A vegetarian regimen
Nor tempts me, nor inspires my pen.
Still, five substantial daily meals
Are more than health requires, one feels ;
And, when the Season's at its height
And knives and forks ply day and night,
 A man, beyond all question,
Requires a cormorant's appetite,
 An ostrich's digestion.
O ye who dread the fell attack
 Of "indy" or of gout, beware
The "awful heavy lunch," the "snack,"
 The orgie of the millionaire !

They tell us that we live too fast,
Our daily pace too hot to last ;

That Little Mary is our mentor,
Our motto, *Deus Noster Venter* ;
But how, if Fashion be not fed,
Or have inadequate nutrition,
Can it maintain its high condition ?
Let cynics brand as rank outsiders
Esurient Vanity Fair's " providers,"
But why, great Heaven ! should it care,
When banqueting on sumptuous fare,
How its Amphitryons are bred ?
Hosts should be gauged by money's worth—
A fig for the accident of birth !
Let them but keep the table spread,
And let the cellar match the *chef*,
The voice of Cavil finds us deaf.

Hard is the Season's toil and stress,
Most hard the tasks of idleness ;
The eager overworked *mondaine*
Who slaves at Fashion late and early,
Dragging an " ever-lengthening chain "
Amid the social hurly-burly—
In all the world, it seems to me,
None live the strenuous life as she.
Natheless our vigour we retain,

And Youth's an ailment that is chronic :
With Smart Society for our tonic,
And Art's resources, we contrive
To vanquish *anno domini* ;
Time's ravages we all defy
And no one's more than thirty-five.
" Kittens " we are, I grant you, and
" Kittens," please Heaven ! we'll be for ever,
(Do, Mr. Benson,* understand)
But " grizzly kittens " never—never !

* " . . . rouge and hair-dye and alien tresses lend their aid to make a grizzly kitten of her."—MR. BENSON on " Social Sickness " in the *Fortnightly*.

VII

POLITE CONVERSATION

IF " bridge is killing conversation "
 (Could any statement be absurder ?)
Perhaps some people's inclination
 Might be to justify the murder !
But there is not the slightest risk
That table-talk will grow less brisk :
The raconteur, the humorist,
Will still continue to exist
And, on occasion, to emit
The coruscations of his wit.
We denizens of Vanity Fair
 Scorn the dull world's insipid prate,
(As novel-readers are aware)
 We do not talk—we scintillate.
You know how natural to us
 Are epigram and paradox,
Inversion of the obvious
 Spiced with the quip that mildly shocks.

On language unadorned with *argot*
We lay a very strict embargo—
To use plain terms of common-sense
Argues an understandin' dense—
And sternly bar, as unconvivial,
Aught but the infinitely trivial.
One topic only cannot weary us,
Though it is very, very serious :
Talk but of matters dietetic,
Of rival cures, of Dr. Haig's
Treatment for Uric Acid plagues—
We listen, rapt and sympathetic.
'Mid all this gossip on diseases,
Symptoms intestinal, hepatic,
There pass the usual jokes and wheezes—
The salt is not exactly Attic,
The *crambe* sadly *repetita*
Of tales that border on the risky,
But our habitual gloom grows lighter
When, bored, we struggle to be frisky,
And make a brave attempt to swell
The chorus, "Vive la bagatelle !"

VIII

RELIGION *À LA MODE*

THE vogue of Erudition is dead :
The fashion of the Dilettante
With learning wide (but rather scanty)
Was lately knocked upon the head.
No longer now our Soulful Sets
Of smartly blue Society pets,
Or lettered Coteries, have occasion
To guard their Edens from invasion.
 We've given fads of culture
 Respectable sepulture ;
The latest philosophic notion
 Or creed of Mrs. Humphry Ward
Fails to enkindle our emotion,
 But leaves us most completely bored.
On theories of a different sort
 We place our fond reliance ;
We dabble with the Higher Thought,
 Or toy with Christian Science.

In these light spiritual bubbles
Mayfair forgets its earthly troubles,
Lulled by soft-crowing chanticleers
 (From Plato most uncandid stealers)
Who preach "new" doctrines of Ideas
 Or pose as "scientific" healers.
We love to listen to the crank,
The wonder-working mountebank ;
Astrology and necromancy,
 Psychic researches and inquiries,
Enthral our mystery-loving fancy
 With cults of Isis and Osiris.
These cobwebs of the brain amuse
The connoisseurs of novel views :
Let but the creed be up-to-date,
'Twill charm the modern giddy-pate,
And scepticism no longer shocks
A heedless age that doubts and mocks—
We change our creeds as lightly as our frocks.*

* I sometimes give, just as a treat,
My stanza's final line five feet !

IX

THE CULT OF BEAUTY

No cult or gospel have I known,
Since Fashion's sea I launched my skiff on,
Against all rivals hold its own,
Like "Beauty and the Higher Chiffon."
And what sartorial charm on earth,
What smart toilette or frock by Worth,
Can rival a well-made complexion
That dazzles and defies detection?
If Nature made your face a failure,
Or decked it with superfluous hair,
Then visit "Beauty's Penetralia"*
And interview the Sybil there.
Of all your little troubles tell her—
The freckles, crows'-feet, the "saltcellar";
Most efficacious are her simples
To cure all blemishes and pimples:

* 495, New Bond Street (entirely gratuitous advertisement).

She charms away the double chin,
Eradicates your every wrinkle ;
Makes thin folk plump, and fat folk thin—
Rejuvenates you in a twinkle.
Her “Pukka” straps for chin and face
Keep vagrant muscles in their place,
While not to purchase her Frown Plasters
Is simply courting of disasters—
And let me here express a hope
That you will give her talents scope
By shunning, like the poison, soap !

Your husband, if a roarer,
Should try her Anti-Snorer—
'Twill mend (or end) him, I suspect !
Her wigs—your pardon, “transformations”—
Deceive, they tell me, the elect.
So cunning are her machinations,
Her arts so subtly therapeutical,
That folks who erstwhile mocked her
Now bless that Beauty Doctor
Who worked such magic on their cuticle.
Though long the appointed tasks and hard,
Submit—'tis idle to rebel :
Exceeding great is your reward
And, martyrs to the Cult know well,
Il faut souffrir pour être belle.

THE WAY WE LIVE NOW

SOCIETY cherishes some sad

Memories of past financial shocks ;
The times have been extremely bad

For those who speculate in stocks :
Bad luck and adverse differences
Compel curtailment of expenses,
While, with each failure of supplies,
New wants continually arise.

The tribe that lives (" Onlooker " said it)
On " charity, and cards, and credit "—
By folk not given to pretty speeches
Yclept, unkindly, human leeches—
In times like these, I fear, must find
It hard to raise the needed wind.

Their industries are various—

The gains somewhat precarious :
From Ascot to the Stock Exchange,
From bridge to baccarat, they range,

Or lure the transitory Noodle
To part from his redundant boodle :
 Their mode of life gregarious,
From town to country house they flit
 And exercise their powers of suction,
While now and then they make a bit
 By furnishing an introduction.
There's nothing that they more abom-
inate than that expression, "Comm.,"
But yet I greatly doubt their spurning it
If half a chance occurs of earning it !
When the Promoter goes his rounds
Through social happy hunting-grounds,
Or tempting rumours fill Mayfair
 That Hebrew Jews or other aliens
Are operating, bull or bear,
 In Yankees, Coppers, or Westralians—
Fate lures them on : they take a hand ;
 Or, perhaps, woo Fortune in the "Circus,"
And swell that impecunious band
 Whose goal is Queer Street or the work'us !

Much I commiserate, too, your plight,
O smart financial Neophyte !—
No Unemployed deserve our pity
Like workless Somethings-in-the-City.

It is your elevating mission
To rouse in people of high station
The appetite for speculation,
To herald the impending Boom
In many a West-End drawing-room,
And point the shortest cuts to wealth—

And, I've a sort of vague suspicion,
You do not do it for your health,

But charge, I think, a slight commission !

'Tis thus our ladies of to-day

Get so surprisingly *au fait*

With all that passes, City way ;

'Tis thus one hears from coral lips

Most unexpected market tips,

When sweet-and-thirty tells her " pal,"

With knowing air prophetic,

" The Syndicate that owns the shares

In Eldorado Banket

Is going to make things hot for bears ; "

And so she means to plank it

Down, if her broker will but trust her,

And go for once a regular buster !

X

THE CLIMBER'S PATH TO SOCIAL
FAME

IF, when you have amassed your pile,
You feel the prevalent ambition,
And seek your leisure to beguile
With souls of loftier position ;
If, like a Peri, at the gate
Of our smart Paradise you wait,
In patience striving to appease
Some janitor who holds the keys—
Pray, let me tell how best you can
Become what England's Knight of Tea,
In happiest phraseology,
Has styled the "perfect gentleman."

In politics you must not vary
From our prevailing Tory norm ;
Of change, you know, we're very chary—
Nought but the Tariff needs reform :

We plump, whatever doubts perplex us,
Solid for the Commercial Nexus.
Our tastes are somewhat military,
With quite a Chauvinistic smack ;
 We love to beat the warlike drum,
To wave the dear old Union Jack
 And wish its foes at kingdom come :
With guns and submarines for toys
In martial lore we train our boys ;
And, when the nuptial knot is tied,
Glad hymns of battle soothe the bride.
So brace each muscle, thew, and sinew,
And show whatever manhood's in you ;
Uphold your country's ancient laws ;
Espouse the Patriotic Cause ;
And, fervid as a Park Lane helot,
At Empire-building be a zealot,
Your patron saint the good St. Jingo,
Your favourite brew Imperial stingo.
Learn to endure without fatigue
Long meetings of the Primrose League :
 By liberal donations
 To Party organizations
Win for your Knightly self and Dame
A Habitation and a name,
And enter on your earthly rest
Hobnob with Britain's noblest and her best.

XII

POLITICS AND THE UPPER CRUST

THESE matters prompt my Muse to speak
A word on *la haute politique*,
And what more apt or stirring theme
Than our Society régime ?
O Demos, yours was once the crown
To wear. Why have you laid it down ?
Time was, you wrung from Church and State
Obeisance as the Lord's Anointed,
But now you tamely abdicate—
Your friends are sadly disappointed !
The old minority regains
From your limp, nerveless hands, the reins ;
And, forged anew the ancient fetters,
You bow submission to your betters :
And so, to gratify your bent—
The inborn courtier-like propensity
That yearly sprouts with fresh intensity—

Kind Heaven, for your liege lords, has sent
A most exclusive Government !

'Tis rude to talk, like "Tommy" Bowles,
Of "Cecils, Sycophants, and Souls!"
Such whirling words, so hot and strong,
I reprobate as wholly wrong.

Nor need the Classes take affright,
Though some irate Iconoclast
May blow his penny trumpet-blast
Against the citadel of Caste—
Nay, let them bid the brawler go
(As is most meet) to Jericho !

I heard a fierce reforming Wight
Cry, "Woe!" on our degenerate race :
"Blue ruin," he said, "and deep disgrace,
Ye Britons, stare you in the face !
Society wears its yoke Semitic,

And ye accept their double sway—
Lord ! how the vapours grow mephitic,

The atmosphere is *faisandée* !
Fie ! on you, giddy folk of Fashion,
Who kindle with unseemly fire
And madly throw the reins of Passion*
On to the shoulders of Desire—

* "Smart Society throws the reins of passion on to the neck of desire."—*For Efficiency* : ARNOLD WHITE.

The nation in a mess *must* get
 That's vassal to a Bad Smart Set !
 So, down with Mayfair and Belgravia !
 And hail the Middle Class your saviour ;
 Shake off, before you're wholly undone,
 The yoke of wicked Babylondon,
 And you will see salvation come
 From Sheffield, Manchester, or Brum.
 Let an indignant people's vote
 Slay government by petticoat—
 Blue-blooded stark incompetence,
 The fruit of Social Influence :
 No more let woman's tears or smiles
 Bamboozle military nob ;
 No more a social Siren's wiles
 Originate most shocking jobs !
 The Government has been detected—
 The fraud can be no longer hid :
 Its doom was sealed when its ' projected
 Efficiency ' proved simply—Kidd !"

Thus, O ye Statesmen, folk deplore
 Your fatal lack of perspicacity :
 Delve deeper, and unearth our store
 Of hidden governing capacity ;

Forbear, most puissant Party Chief,
Mindful of unemployed relations,
To lavish your outdoor relief
In Ministerial situations—
Cease, O thou ineffectual Mandarin,
The glades of Office to meander in !

XIII

“AVE SOCIETAS! MAGNA ES, ET
PRÆVALEBIS”

I

PHILOSOPHERS say nations get
Such rulers as they merit : yet
Some foolish folk with anger bridle
Because Society, England's Idol,
Pursuing laudable ambitions,
Accepts the gifts that Fortune brings—
The snuggest berths, the best positions—
And plays the Sultan, pulls the strings,
And generally loves to sit on
Its deferential brother Briton !
I hold it but a sorry joke
To call John Bull a democrat :
Fun at your fat sides, John, they poke,
We know you're anything but that !
The arch and keystone of your polity

Is Man's essential *inequality*,
 And who would change for Arithmocracy
 Our Quality's benign autocracy?
 Hey! then, for Cabinets of blue blood,
 Unsoiled by any taint of new blood;
 Let none but the patriciate
 Be pilots of your Ship of State—
 A British Ministerial commoner
 Should rank among our rare phenomena!

Let Liberals wax or Tories wane,
 Your old allegiance will not falter;
 Let fiscal problems tax your brain—
 Whether 'tis through the foreign dump
 That British manufacturers slump
 And harassed merchants get the hump?
 Or would, perchance, the Tariff whittle
 Our medium-sized loaf to a little?—
 Your sentiments will never alter.
 What though the City world, grown sager,
 May grudge the guinea-pig his guerdon,
 And deem the nobly born front-pager
 A quite unnecessary burden,
 No fear of true-blue John's defection—
 Politics or Company Direction,
 He always much prefers to trust
 His interests to the Upper Crust!

II

The times, I know, are sadly changed :
 With elongated faces
 O'er the old order disarranged
 We sing, “ Eheu, fugaces !”
 The status of our Quality,
 No longer what it used to be,
 Is menaced by a mob of new men—
 So runs the universal chatter,
 Displaying, doubtless, much acumen—
 Yet, think you, does it greatly matter ?
 The old nobility we cherish
 Is on a sure foundation builded ;
 But, should (which Heaven forbend !) it perish,
 We'll frame a new one—richly gilded !
 Or millionaires or noblemen,
 Britons must have their Upper Ten—
 Fate and the planets will determine
 Whose lot it is to wear the ermine.
 O Middle and O Lower Class,
 Gentility's mad dog* has bit you all,

* “ That mad puppy they calls gentility,” says George Borrow's gipsy in *The Romany Rye*, bit the *chies* (girls) to the eventual undoing of gipsyism.

And roused a raging thirst, alas !

That's bound, I fear, to grow habitual.

Raise, then, in unison upraise

To Fashion's god your hymn of praise :

Still chant your imitative pæan

O'er those who live " melodious days "

In our terrestrial Empyræan !

COLUMBIA VICTRIX

COLUMBIA VICTRIX

I

How choice the favours thou dost pour,
Columbia, on old England's shore !

Of imports a most mixed assortment
Across the herring-pond we draw—
All manner of materials raw,
And corn and cattle, pork and beans,
And cunningly devised machines ;
The Company that shortly busts,
And big monopolies and Trusts—
All these thou sendest us, together
With samples of most curious weather,
And I confess it puzzles me
Why they're admitted duty free—
Duchesses, too, and Gibson goddesses,
With irreproachable deportment
And smart Parisian skirts and bodices ;
And they are poaching, I'm afraid,
On your preserves, O peerless British Maid !

11

Commingling in our fashion-fray,
Mark the two antithetic types—
Coy Phyllis of an outworn day,
Smart Hebe from the Stars and Stripes
Who rules by feminine right divine.
Triumphant all along the line,
She comes! that captivating houri,
From far Wisconsin or Missouri
To Europe's shores, to subjugate us
And elevate her social status.
Child of a strenuous age of hustle
When life is one continuous tussle,
Observe this haughty young Sultana
So dexterously limned by Dana
Gibson—alert, and 'cute, and quizzical,
Replete with mental charms and physical,
She knows a thing or two, I guess!
Not hers to dream in realms ethereal;
Her kingdom is of things material,
(And what, regarded rightly, is
This modern life of ours but BIZ?)
Fair incarnation of Success,
Of Luxury the spruce Ambassadors!

III

With countrymen of Pierpont Morgan

The heart, discreetly shepherded—

If not quite a superfluous organ—

Is ne'er allowed to rule the head ;

And when, in Yankee hyperbole,

Digestion reigns in place of soul,

Poor Europe pits her skill in vain

Against that unencumbered brain !

Columbia's empire in finance

Who dare deny or contravene ?

And now in *chic* she leads the dance,

(Your pardon, the cake-walk, I mean :

We're much too skittish and too fast

For ancient methods of Terpsichore ;

The stately measures of the past

Must yield to Ethiop high-kickery)

And each egregious drawing-room antic,

Or frolic ultra-Corybantic,

That's ushered on the social scene

To tickle tastes grown epicene—

Its home, you bet your boots, is Transatlantic.

The Southern Press and pulpits thunder ;
The Capital of Pork
"Voices " the West's derisive wonder ;
Ebullient literary lions
Chastise with straightest talk
The pranks of gay New York ;
And, of thy fierce ink-slinging scions,
Hast thou more mettlesome or hotter son,
Columbia, than stout Henry Watterson,*
The frolicsome Four Hundred's foeman ?
Symptoms he spies of worse than Roman
Or Babylonian decadence—

Wealth, vulgar, flaunting, and despotic,
The starred-and-striped Omnipotence
Whose touch finds every door unbarred ;
The morals of the poultry-yard,
When wedlock's brief tempestuous course
Ends in Dakota-made divorce ;

Luxury run mad or Tommyrotic—
Hotels, with valets, maids, and vets,
For Smart Society's canine pets ;
High jinks of Heliogabalus,

* The famous Kentucky editor and scourge of the Four Hundred, who shoots folly as it flies in the "brutal parvenuism"—the "diamond-dog-collar" and monkey parties, the farmyard banquets, the dinners in sewers or on horseback—of Newport and New York.

When roysterers paint the town vermillion
With orgies costing half a million ;
Gargantuan feasts to stagger us—
I like your dining, Yankee boss,
On fillets of rhinoceros ;
But, when the trumpet's martial strains*
Salute the pachyderm's remains,
I own it makes me feel a trifle cross !

The *soirée* diamond-dog-collar
Proclaims the empire of the dollar ;
And, O ingenuous money-spinner,
What glory when thy better half
Achieves the freakiest freak dinner
That ever earned a paragraph,
And New York's best and loveliest
Greet, in some tasty Newport villa,
(Methinks, a not unfitting guest)
A hairy ape or young gorilla !
The feast, no less, must surely please
Where all the guests are divorcees—
To think that license can so far go
Within *thy* walls, austere Chicago !

* It was well, no doubt, for the Camping Club to dine off Prince Henry of Prussia's rhinoceros from the Berlin Zoo ; but why the " escort of trumpeters " ?

That charming banquet *à cheval*
Is getting too conventional ;
'Tis out of date : seek something newer,
And hold your revels in a sewer ;
Or else let cattle, pigs, and horses
 Grace "little dinners" in a farm—
To linnets' tongues and such-like courses
 They lend a trooly-rooral charm.
Quelled is the barnyard's every sound :
 Hushed the jay's chatter and the daw's,
 The peacock's voice is mute—because
He finds his scream completely drowned !
Farewell, thou gay metropolis !
Be mine henceforth Arcadian bliss,
Pure pastoral pleasure, such as this !
So may the Spirit of Rusticity
Relume the lamp of our old-world simplicity.

IV

Lo, there ! from her bathing-machine
 (Was ever an expression worse
 Adapted for iambic verse ?)
Steps forth the stately Newport queen,

In all the family diamonds decked !
No vassal she of drab democracy—
Where all are peers, but none elect—
But herald of the new gynocracy
Whose stars, from out the Occident,
Illumine our social firmament.
Her girls, the fairest of the fair,
Fine fleur of modish *Outre Mer*,
Disport like mermaids in the deep,
Or climb like antelopes the steep,
While billion-dollar'd gentlemen
Pursue them with adoring ken,
And wanton breezes kiss their loosed back-hair.

Though very seldom by his side,
She is her goodman's joy and pride :
When in Society she blazes,
Eclipsing all her rivals' crazes,
(Of the Four Hundred she's the one
That most distinctly takes the bun
In showing how things should be done !)
The triumphs are not hers alone,
But half the glory is his own.
Of his ambition they're the crown ;
For them he daily slaves 'way down
The sweltering purlieus of the town—

His aim, his goal, his life's desire
To pile the heap of dollars higher.
By him they're made, by her they're spent,
And either side is quite content :
O blessed conjugal arrangement,
Thy fruit is union, not estrangement !
So spare us, Stranger, your derision,
For theirs is mutual toil's most just division.

v

When young John Bull arrives to woo
Some gilded niece of Uncle Sam,
Why such a mighty how-di-do,
Such wealth of journalistic flam ?
Why must the Eagle flap his pinions
Whene'er a money-bag is wed,
And raise throughout his wide dominions
A clamour fit to wake the dead ?
A dozen times they tell the story—
The gilt, the glitter, and the glory
Of sparkling gems and priceless plate :
Of everything we learn the cost—
No single item must be lost ;
The cake a quarter-ton in weight

With wondrous gewgaws interspersed,
And wheeled on lines of silver tram :
The wedding twice or thrice rehearsed :
 The perfumes poured in fountains,
 Exotics piled in mountains—
Pomp overstepping taste and sense,
Most barbarous magnificence.
How strange they never seem to know
The meaning of the “ *toujours trop* ”!
It ought to make them “ tired ”;—but no :
As hay-fed steeds run riot on corn,
So on Plutocracy new-born
Such Nabob’s pageants never pall :
The Calf of Gold exalts its horn,
(My mingled metaphor transcends
All previously recorded blends !)
And stout old Mammon, lord of all,
With smile benignant holds high carnival.

A LOOK AHEAD

The view is held by certain philosophers that England's future will be social rather than industrial. Our supremacy in commerce and war may be lost ; but our land, and its Society, will still be recognised as the most charming in the world. Culture, luxury, and gaiety will abound ; and, with a mighty army of the "servile classes " to minister to their needs, life will be very pleasant all round for the well-to-do. Great Britain will then be the foreigner's health resort, a trysting-place for lettered *diletantti*, the " playground and the pleasaunce," as Lord Rosebery put it, " of the plutocrats of all nations"—quite a nice place, in short, for cosmopolitan tea-parties on an extended scale!—See "The Social Future of England," by WILLIAM CLARKE, in the *Contemporary Review*.



A LOOK AHEAD

I

I view in prospect, far away,
The dawning of a glorious day ;
I see (with Mr. William Clarke
And other learned men of mark)
It usher in a sprightly era,
And bring Utopia rather nearer ;
A sumptuous age of gold and pleasure,
 Of Fashion's choicest vanities,
Of luxury that passes measure
 And elegant inanities,
Of fuss and feathers, frills and frippery,
 Light work and plenteous holiday—
Its motto, *dulce est desipere*,
 For all the world will be at play !

'Twas Britain's glory in the past
 To brave the battle and the storm ;
But, in the ages I forecast,
 Her greatness takes another form.
A strange transfiguration I see

In those Elysian days to be :
Enjoying with unruffled pride—
 As fits an old Imperial race—
All that for which our fathers died,
 We find ourselves in easy case
And bless old England's lucky star
That we are what we are, we are !
With wealth and creature comforts sated,
The nation's vigour has abated :
Our flag no longer flouts the breeze,
Our fleets no longer sweep the seas ;
 The sword rests in its scabbard, rusted :
We have but little stomach for
The stern arbitrament of War
(Forgive this interdicted rhyme ;
It shan't occur another time !)
 Bellona hides her face, disgusted
With Britons, erst so prone to strife,
 Now peaceful grown and inoffensive.
We've mastered quite the Art of Life ;
 Our culture, too, is most extensive :
Of sensibility overfull,
 Our manner suave and acquiescent,
(I find it a decided pull
 To speak in the historic present)
We cultivate the Beautiful
And find the process not unpleasant !

II

Artists in charm and elegance,
We view with much complacence
Our British-made Renaissance
Reviving glories of old France,
Or those superb Italian ages,
When Culture blossomed like the rose,
Portrayed in mediæval pages.

The times, in fact, resemble those
(At least, I'm given to apprehend so)
Of the magnificent Lorenzo ;
And poets see fulfilled their dream
In England's Grove of Academe,
Where every Dilettante writes

And prints the fruit of his reflections ;
Each Nobody, ah me ! indites
His " Visits," " Life," or " Recollections."

Our highly-polished coteries take,
In Albion's blissful by-and-by,
Beyond compare, the social cake ;

And briefly I will tell you why—
Then all the world, whate'er his trade is,
Belongs to some exclusive Set ;
Your washerwomen all are ladies,
Your grocer figures in Debrett.

I see our land become a sort
Of universal pleasaunce
For foreign swells in search of sport ;
'Tis honoured with the presence
Of Princes forced to flee their Court :
The Plutocratic Upper Ten
And harassed Yankee business men
Flock to this charming health-resort.
There the successful Colonist
May find the peace that age deserves ;
The overworked Capitalist
Recuperate his shattered nerves :
For Dives and his parasites,
The learned or artistic man
Or *blasé* cosmopolitan,
It is a wellspring of delights.

III

A land of pageantries and shows,
Of dandies, exquisites, and beaux,
Of ladies blithe and debonair
And most artistically fair—
Its life, how gracious and serene it is
How fascinating its amenities !
For jocund Mirth then dissipates
All hypochondriac miasma,

And every countenance simulates
The sea's ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα.
The world our playground, life our play-
time,
We eat and drink and have a gay time ;
Discretion to the winds we fling
And carry on like anything.
Our bodies, minds, and faces
Consecrate to the Graces,
Inimitable is the quality—
Unmarred by any flaw or blot—
Of our æstheticized frivolity
And smart Corinthian Tommyrot !
Freely the Wine of Life is quaffed :
('Tis positively sinful,
Imbibing such a skinful)
And, with the hot and heady draught,
A giddy world grows sadly *ivrc*
On undiluted *joie de vivre* !

IV

In classical Renaissance times
An ill-cut coat was worst of crimes ;
To wear a shabby gown or frock,
To be a thing of scorn, meant—

They knew the worth, that ancient stock,
Of personal adornment ;
And, think you, 'twill be less the rage
In England's destined Attic age ?
I dream sweet dreams of daintiness -
A coming carnival of dress—
When all our London streets are lined
With shops to please Patricia's mind,
With wares to deck Patricia's back,
And bijoutry and bric-à-brac ;
When—*chiffon, chiffon*, everywhere—
It gladdens every eye to see
The wilderness of underwear
And fascinating *lingerie*—
Costumiers and milliners,
Coiffeurs de dames and jewellers,
Tailors, galore, and haberdashers
To cater for the tribe of mashers—
All run by scions of the peerage.
Of sombre garb we'll make a clearance :
No weeds will be permitted, no
Symbol or badge of woman's woe ;
We even shall discard our gents'
Time-honoured black habiliments,
And everybody will be dight
In brave array and garments bright—

Coats, breeches, scarves, a brilliant medley
Of toggerie *à la* Joseph Sedley.

But woe betide the luckless wight
Who boldly struggles to be free
From the sartorial tyranny,*
And won't be either smart or *chic* :

Our Twentieth-Century Sybaris
Will brand a rebel such as this
A hopeless social heretic.
Anathema on him who loathes
Our new Philosophy of Clothes
When Fashion gives the law, and when
With new-born chivalry our men

Divide their empire with the sex !
For there will come a happy day
(Let's hope it will not long delay)
When all the clubs are "cock-and-hen,"
And angel-hosts of "Petticoat Lane,"†
Falling upon Pall Mall amain,
The Carlton and "The Rag" annex,

* "Hunting men must ride in pink, and their grooms in livery, or the former will be boycotted. . . . Officers and undergraduates unbecomingly attired will be severely 'ragged.' . . . Only the latest *modes* are to be worn by ladies, under pain of social excommunication."—Extract from *Sumptuary Laws of the Twentieth Century*.

† Dover Street, W., where ladies' clubs abound.

Invade the Travellers, and storm
 The Athenæum and Reform.
 (But, when the sexes thus are blended,
 At vulgar nicknames we must stickle :
 Our ears must never be offended
 By epithets like " Pinch-and-Tickle "
 Or " Hag " *—'tis odious so to dub
 A reputable Ladies' Club !)

V

To make a science of his pleasure,
 As fits your earnest Hedonist,
 A man requires a deal of leisure.
 Brain-fag and other dangers lurk
 To prey on those who overwork,
 And so Posterity must insist
 On making health its chiefest care ;
 For it, of course, is well aware
 That Man's most pressing need is plenty
 Of rest and *dolce far niente*,
 And very frequent change of air.
 Its Church, its doctors, and the Bar
 Agree in one particular—

* Nicknames of present-day institutions, cited by *The Ladies' Field*.

That, lest they should o'ertax their powers,
They ought to labour shorter hours.
Its Parliamentary talking-shop
On rambling rhetoric puts a stop :
The Statesman hurries from debate ;
He disapproves of talking late—
No power on earth can make him wait,
Or from the path of pleasure lure
The Ministerial Amateur—

When dinner-parties claim their presence.
Long ere the high-day of St. Grouse
Tired politicians quit the House ;
(The Inner Cabinet suffices
To settle all the usual crises)
The Session's lapsed into quiescence,
And closed the future Toby, M.P.'s Essence.

In that bright age the City toff
Three days a week, or four, is off,
Spurning his dull environment,
For sport, Society, or golf.
The world has gained a deal more sense,
And *joie de vivre* its rightful vent,
Believe me, half a century hence !
Early the merchant quits his desk—
He's free as everybody would be

To-day, if things were as they should be,
And life were gay and picturesque.
Others, perhaps, our trade have got,
Our industries are gone to pot—
The Yankees have absorbed the lot—
But, in this after-time, we still
Retain our old financial skill :
As hucksters in the money-mart
We play a most important part,
And gamesters make their fortunes quick
By plunging gaily in the thick
Of market rigs, prospectus gammon,
And all the tricks of modern Mammon,
For none can beat us in *that* art ;
And Britain rules, if not the Ocean,
At least the realm of Company Promotion !

VI

An age of Pleasure and of Gold !
Consorted powers—'tis they alone
Rule from the gutter to the throne,
And boss the nations, as of old.
Sir Capel Court and Miss Mayfair
Have plighted mutual affiance :
Good luck attend you, happy pair !
Yours is a very strong alliance,

And all mankind must bow its head
When Fashion and Finance are wed.
O beauteous Bride, O gilded Groom !
Make room, ye proletariat, make room !

VII

Although their efforts often fail
Who strive to pierce the Future's veil,
I cannot but divine with sorrow
The rural England of to-morrow
When, deserts all the fields and downs,
The labourers huddle in the towns ;
No sturdy yeoman ploughs the land,
Or gathers in the new-mown hay ;
His sons have sought some foreign strand,
His farm is falling to decay,
And in the Squire's old easy chair
Reclines the new-fledged Millionaire.
The scanty remnants of the peasants
Nor sheep nor cattle rear—but pheasants :
Flunkies, in place of rustic Hodges,
Tenant the cottages and lodges,
The chauffeur with his motor-car,
And well-armed guardians of the game—
Of Midas all dependents are ;

And, if the little street-bred folk
 Contented wear his easy yoke,
 Why—who shall say they are to blame?
 In countryside, upon the shore,
 Rise pleasure-centres by the score,
 And love of bustle, change, and noise
 The love of hearth and home expels;
 We live, in scorn of rural joys,
 A nomad life in big hotels:
 The Season lasts from Spring to Spring,
 Each fribble has his twelve-months' fling—
 For then is Mammon's kingdom come,
 The Smart Set's Millinerennium,
 The Avatar of modish Cockneydom.

VIII

A sound of rending fills the air.
 Revolt is here, Revival there,
 With clamour of religious faction;
 The wise *Spectator** bids beware
 Impending Puritan reaction.

* The *Spectator*, in an article on the last Society *cause célèbre*, suggested a possible re-awakening of the old English Puritan spirit, when the masses, by means of excessive taxation or otherwise, will give the upper classes a very bad quarter of an hour.

So listen, lords and ladies gay,
To what your mentors have to say ;
From many a grave and learned page
I cull the following counsel sage :
“ Abandon luxury and license
And mend your manners and your ways ;
Of honour cultivate a high sense ;
Live clean, if not laborious, days :
Rush not in blindness on your fate—
Thin is the ice that you are treading—
Nor let repentance come too late.
With luck you may escape beheading,
But a vengeful proletariat
(If you persist in sloth and sin)
Half-measures will not tarry at—
'Twill bleed and ‘ tax you to the skin ! ’ ”

Cassandra-voices, thus in warning
Uplifted, presage days of mourning ;
And I, too, ere my task be done,
Would rouse the worldling from his
sleep
And make the frivol's flesh to creep—
You'll find me, by comparison,
A fairly cheerful Jeremiah ;
But, when the fat is in the fire,

And all the world engulfed in woe,
Remember that I told you so !
I see, with vision of the Seer,
 Things strange, and terrible, and new :
Hear, ye smart Crystal-Gazers, hear
 What portents burst upon my view,
What shapes and phantoms of affright
Ride in a wild Walpurgis-night !
I see old Chaos come again
And Anarchy renew its reign :
Demos, vindictive and defiant,
 To misery's yoke no more submits ;
Look you ! the lean and hungry giant
 Rises, and gives his masters fits !
To purge our morals, end our scandals,
 The spawn of poverty and crime—
Battalions of wild Goths and Vandals—
 Are issuing from their dens of slime.
Hark ! 'tis Rebellion's tocsin fell
That strikes Society's death-knell !
Hot grows the strife, and ever hotter ;
 Masses and Classes are at grips :
Thrones topple, lordly Empires totter ;
 And—last of these my Delphic tips—
Old Mammon proves a genuine rotter
 And suffers serious eclipse !

Pale is the Plutocrat with fear,
And quite astonishingly humble ;
He feels the end is drawing near,
The pillars of his Temple crumble—
Falls, fateful, on his prescient ear
The tumbrel's ominous, dull rumble !

THE END



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